

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 4-6 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failure to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 4 has been amended to provide sufficient antecedent basis for the terms “said cutting signal” and “said cutter” in Step (e). Claim 4 has been amended to delete “said” and insert -- a -- before cutting signal and also in Step (e) to delete “cutter” and insert -- separator --. The separator is set forth in Step (d) of Claim 4 and therefore provides antecedent basis.

Claim 11 has also been amended to provide sufficient antecedent basis for the former term “said conveyor means”. Claim 11 has been amended to delete “in said conveyer means” and to state that the booster blower is located in the -- elongated cushion delivery duct -- which is now in element (a) of Claim 1, as amended.

These amendments to Claims 4 and 11 are made to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention and are not intended to narrow the scope of the claims. With these amendments, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is now moot.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 7-8, and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Landrum (U.S. Patent No. 6,428,246), in view of Murakami (U.S. Patent No. 5,581,983).

The primary reference, Landrum, U.S. Patent No. 6,428,246, does indeed disclose a conveyor having a blower **12** for conveying a string of cushions **20** from point to another. Landrum also discloses a sensor to generate a signal permitting the filling of the single hopper **40** which serves multiple purposes of conveying, storing and dispensing the air bags to the workers **74**. *Col. 3, line 35*. Landrum does not show, for example, means for diverting the string of cushions to a plurality of work stations; does not show a separator adaptor to sever the string of cushions in response to a signal; and does not show a controller adapted to generate a signal to

control the diversion of the string of cushions and separating the string of cushions. The reason why Landrum does not show these essential elements of Claim 1 is that Landrum states that the hopper 40 (which also serves as the conveying duct) fills up with bags 20 such that the bags 20 and the lower portion of the single hopper 40 (which also serves as the conveying duct) can be easily reached by the workers 74 through ports 52 (*Col. 4, lines 50-54*). In other words, the string of cushions of Landrum are not sent to multiple hoppers each at a plurality of workstations.

To support the several missing elements lacking in Landrum, the Examiner has cited Murakami as teaching "a separator 34 with cutters 36, *i.e.*, knife and a controller via "6" for the purpose of severing a string of cushions in response to a control signal for a predetermined length of the cushion 12". The jest of the Murakami invention is for a gas injection device for supplying gas into a gas bag. While there is a cutter means 34 shown for severing the terminal end of gas bag along its entire width, there is no disclosure whatsoever of conveying the air-filled bags to a workstation. The inflated bags drop into a "product container 11".

Thus, Claim 1 as now amended requires that the separator be adapted to sever the string of cushions within the elongated cushion delivering duct. This is not taught Murakami nor would it be suggested by combining Murakami and Landrum.

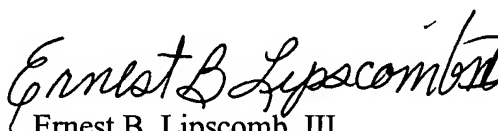
Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4-6 have been indicated as being allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. In view of the amendments made and discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 4-6 should now be allowed.

Claims 9 and 13 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the amendments to Claim 1 in the arguments set forth above related to obviousness, it is submitted that Claim 1 in the arguments set forth above related to obviousness. It is submitted that Claim 1 is allowable. Accordingly, Claims 9 and 13 have not been rewritten in independent form at the present time pending the allowance of Claim 1.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,




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